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D15 “youth ambassadors” attend US

Using technology to come to grips with serious social issues was the challenge Blanchardstown youths to Boston, Massachusetts recently.

Local teenagers, Edwyn Rooney (16), Simon O'Connor (15) and Mic travelled to the Intel-sponsored Teen Summit in America after being selected by the Foróige Computer Clubhouse in Blanchardstown. As youth ambassadors, they learned new skills and worked together on design projects such as reducing violence and improving the environment.

Sponsored by the Intel Foundation, the three were part of a 300-strong assembly that travelled to the States from twenty countries, as far apart as Russia, New Zealand, Jordan, Israel, South Africa, and Brazil. All were chosen by their local Computer Clubhouse coordinators for outstanding leadership skills, technical and creative ability and contributions to the community.

“We had a very difficult job selecting our ambassadors,” explained Clubhouse co-ordinator Gavin Byrne. “Every member was eligible to be considered and we had to decide which of them would best be able to deal with the highly intensive six day programme. Communication skills and community involvement were significant factors in our final decision.”



The three had the opportunity to express their ideas with high-end technologies, such as graphic design, animation, digital art, music, radio and video documentaries and 3-D modelling. While most of the activities were at Northeastern University Science in Boston - the Intel Computer Clubhouse global headquarters - they participated in the Intel ‘Clubhouse-to-College and Career Fair’ where they explored careers with local college representatives and met professionals working in a variety of fields including engineering, publishing, animation, writing, production, programming, and

“The goals of the Teen Summit were to inspire Computer Clubhouse youth to gain hands-on fluency in technology but also to become self-motivated, confident and collaborative experiences that spark their interest, expand life skills, and make them global citizens,” said Gavin Byrne. “The Clubhouse is about helping youth to develop their passion and nurture their potential. This year, we challenge them to take ownership of their talents and focus on building the future of their communities.”

Since its foundation in 1993, the Intel Computer Clubhouse Network has grown to 100 Clubhouses connecting youth in 21 countries across the world. Every year, leaders from these Clubhouses gather in Boston for a global Teen Summit.

In early 2002, Blanchardstown Clubhouse became the first of its kind in Dublin, Ireland, and was launched by Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern. In the intervening period, over 300

age from 10 to 18 years, have availed of the latest computer based technology in the centre, while the first clubhouse mentor progressed to third-level education in the ITB in the Autumn of 2004.



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